

# Economic Hardship and Basic Education in Nigeria

---

**Walakan Augustine Shede (PhD)<sup>1</sup>, Sani Kasimu (PhD)<sup>2</sup>, Zik Takosole Tusayi (PhD)<sup>3</sup>, Ibrahim Abubakar Alfa<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Science Education, Federal University Wukari, Taraba, State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup> Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup> Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

<sup>4</sup> Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

---

## **Abstract:**

This paper discussed the impact of economic hardship on Basic education in Nigeria. The paper is a position paper. Secondary data were used to support every points raised in the paper. The secondary data were collected from relevant books, seminar papers, workshop papers, articles, etc. The paper concluded that economic hardship has affected basic education management, teachers and students in the Nigerian Basic education. Based on the findings, the paper hereby recommends that the government should increase the funding of basic education so that school administrators can have access to more funds to cope with the increased operational cost of running the schools. The government should increase the salaries of basic school teachers since the economic hardship affected their living standard, this will help the teachers to cope with the high cost of living. Government should provide education grants for students in basic schools and secondary schools. Governments should provide schools buses to aid teachers and students movement to schools. Governments should provide instructional resources to all students to support their education.

**Keywords:** Basic Education, Economic Hardship.

## Introduction

“Economic hardship is an economic situation whereby there are difficulties faced by individuals, institutions and organizations due to income loss, unemployment, job instability, and economic insecurity. Economic hardship can also be seen as an economic condition that is characterized by inflation, high unemployment, high debt rate, low income and reduced standard of living of the people. Economic hardship is a condition of economic meltdown where citizens of a country cannot afford their basic needs due to inflation and a high rate of unemployment that is caused by bad leadership, corruption and unstable economic policies” (Ogunode, Afolabi, & Adi 2024). Economic hardship is defined as the inability or struggle to meet reasonable basic living expenses such as food and shelter (Cunningham, 2019). Economic hardship refers to the perception of a deficit of resources compared to others. Those who suffer from economic hardship are competitively disadvantaged, with resultant consequences for survival and reproduction. The perception of economic hardship may motivate individuals to adopt different behavioral strategies including both increased conflict behaviors and increased cooperation (Refaie & Mishra, 2019)

Economic hardship according to Ogunode, Olofinkua, & Sunmonu, (2024) is an economic activities that is constantly decrease and the decline affects wide economic activities which leads to inflation, unemployment and high standard of living among the citizens. Economic hardship also implies an economic situation that whereby citizens of a country cannot afford to meet up with their economic need as a result of inflation unemployment, high debt burden, low direct investment and high poverty. Economic hardship means an onerous and excessive financial burden that destroys reasonable and beneficial use of property and that would amount to the taking of property without just compensation, or failure to achieve a reasonable economic return in the case of income-producing properties (Lawinsider, 2022). Economic hardship and economic activities decrease substantially, and the decline affects wide portions of the economy and it has some permanence (Sabitu, 2023). Economic hardship is defined as "a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting for some time, normally visible in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), real income, employment, industrial production (National Bureau of Economic Research: NBER, 2012).

Economic hardship in Nigeria is caused by many factors such as unstable economic policies, short-fall in national revenue, inflation, corruption and natural pandemic like COVID-19. According to Fenny. (n.d), one of the factors in recent times responsible for economic hardship in Nigeria is corruption. In 2012, Nigeria was estimated to have lost over \$400 billion to corruption since independence. In January 2020, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranked Nigeria 146 out of 180 countries surveyed. Corruption reduces the overall wealth in a country since it can discourage business from operating in such a corrupt setting. Moreover, corruption harms society by damaging economic development and reforms and hinders the growth of democratic institutions. It impedes the ability of developing countries to attract foreign investors and distorts capital allocation as well as impedes international trade. Corruption has also led to the lack of trust in Nigerian government. Money that was supposed to feed the poor was embezzled because of the high rate of corruption in Nigeria (Fenny, n.d).

Another factor according to Fenny, (n.d) is the natural pandemic called COVID-19. This outbreak has resulted to low access to basic needs and loss of jobs. A high rate of households reported income loss since mid-March 2020, as 79% of households reported that their total income decreased. Basically, while income from all sources were affected, the rate was highest for income from non-farm family business (85%) compared to household farming, livestock or fishing (73%) and wage employment (58%). The commerce, services and agricultural sector was recorded to have the highest number of layoffs. It was also revealed that a high percentage of households could not afford needs such as staple foods, soap and cleaning supplies and access to treatment. The COVID-19 pandemic has increase the hardship in Nigeria.

Also, Fenny, (n.d) observed that the massive drop in international oil price has played a major part in causing economic hardship. This majorly happened because Nigeria as a country was heavily dependent on crude oil. Ever since the drop in Nigeria's revenue, it has been battling with the evident decline in money supply, and this has greatly halted a lot of economic activities. Existing businesses are finding it difficult to survive because the money is not flowing, and it barely flows towards their direction. This means less revenue for existing businesses; and for new businesses, they will barely spring up, because there is no motivation for them to spring up, and not just that, should they want to secure a loan facility, it will be very difficult for them, because the access to finance is so locked up, and interest rate is on the high side (Fenny, n.d).

The economic hardship in Nigeria has affected individual and institutions (Ogunode, Afolabi and Adi 2024; Ogunode, Olofinkua, & Sunmonu, 2024; Musa, 2024; Ogunode, Solomon, & Idonigie, 2024). The economic hardship plus the inflation has affected operation of both public and private institutions like schools. Basic education which is one of the form of education may likely be affected by the economic hardship. National policy (2013) defined Basic Education is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It encompasses the Early Child Care and Development Education (0-4) and 10 years of formal schooling. Early Child Care and Development Education however is segmented into ages 0-4 years, situated in daycare or creches, Fully in the hands of the private sector and social development services, whilst ages 5-6 are within the formal education sector.

The goals of Basic Education are to: a. Provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement; b. develop patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and in the performance of their civic responsibilities; c. inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour; d. inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence, irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, colour, ethnic and socio-economic background; and e. provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability.

The Nigerian educational system is been faced with the problem of economic hardship. Schools internally generated revenue appear to have reduced drastically and the cost of running school facilities have gone up due to inflation. Udi (2024) reported that Nigeria's inflation rate increased to 33.2% for the month of March 2024 according to the latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). This represents 1.5% point increase from the 31.7% recorded in February 2024. The increase in the inflation rate in March was slower compared to the 1.80% increase recorded in February 2024. On a year-on-year basis, the headline inflation rate increased by 11.16% from 22.04% in March 2023. Additionally, the headline inflation rate for March 2024 was 3.02%, a decrease of 0.10% from February 2024, when it was 3.12%. In March 2024, the food inflation rate reached 40.01% year-on-year, marking an increase of 15.56 percentage points from 24.45% in March 2023. This surge in food inflation can be attributed to rising prices for items such as garri, millet, and akpu uncooked fermented (all part of the Bread and Cereals category), as well as yam tuber, water yam, and others. The inflation did not only affects food prices, it also affects operational cost of both private and public institutions which include education. The economic situation in Nigeria has caused great hardship, poverty, hunger and crime in the society (Asuquo, 2019). It is important to examine the impact of economic hardship on basic education in Nigeria.

## **Impact of Economic Hardship on Basic Education in Nigeria**

### **Basic education Management**

Economic hardship in Nigeria has negatively affected the operation of schools. The inflation has led to increase in the operational cost of schools. Educational resources needed for school running are on the high side. Economic hardship in Nigeria has negatively affected financing of educational

institutions. Both public and private education institutions are faced with the problem of economic hardship in Nigeria. The economic hardship has led to reduction in the available of funds for the management of schools in Nigeria. (Akuh, 2024) and concluded that schools running cost increased during economic recession and economic hardship. ...the high cost of educational resources takes a lot from the school management during economic hardship. Teaching materials' costs increased as a result of the economic downturn. Given the high foreign currency rate brought on by the poor economic conditions, the high cost of teaching supplies and equipment keeps them out of the grasp of the majority of institutions (Akuh, 2024).

## **Teachers**

The teachers in the Basic schools in Nigeria are also affected by the economic hardship. Atiga & Ogunode (2021) and Ogunode & Abiola (2022) opined that teachers are the implementers of the school curriculum. Their functions include teaching, preparing lesson notes and lesson plans, evaluating the students, setting exam questions and marking answer sheets. Their functions also include providing leadership in classes, performing academic services, relating with parents on feedback on students' progress and sometimes carrying students on excursions with school permission. Teachers are very important factors in the management of educational institutions, especially secondary schools. The economic has led to inflation which has affected teachers' movement to their respective schools. The economic hardship has led to high cost of living which has affected the salaries of teachers. Many teachers of Basic schools are affected by inflation and the subsidy removal in Nigeria.

Adams (2004) teacher cost of living influence their productivity. Tijani, & Abdullahi, (2021) discovered that economic hardship, inflation, economic recession has brought about a low level of teacher job performance in the schools. They also noted a positive and high significant relationship between Economic Recession, Inflation, Cost of living and teacher productivity. Hence, economic recession was a great determinants of teacher productivity in Secondary Schools, Nigeria according to (Tijani, & Abdullahi, 2021). Giami (2023) and Afolabi, (2024) ascertained that rise in inflation had increased geometrically, and had reduced the standard of living that had inadvertently affected the education sector where the teachers are the centre of focus in the implementation of educational policies for the attainment of predetermined goals and objectives. The situation has become more pathetic with the steady decline in the budgetary allocation to the education sector in the past years. This resulted in the near lack of provision of instructional materials, facilities and equipment, stagnated salaries, no promotion and payment of increment arrears, poor working conditions, and uncondutive teaching and learning environment among others. All these put together are strong indicators that may affect teachers' job performance and negate their level of productivity in the school system. Ahmed & Tochukwu (2024) write that inflation has a major impact on the quality and cost of education. Inflation can affect the salaries of teachers, the cost of tuition and other education expenses, and can influence the quality of education within the system.

## **Students**

Economic hardship in Nigeria has affected the students in the Nigerian basic schools. Economic hardship has led to inflation which has led to increase the transportation cost of going to schools. Most basic school students due to socio-economic background cannot afford to transport themselves to schools. Many students are dropping from school because their parents cannot afford to pay their school fees and buy their educational resources like the textbooks and pens. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], (2009) maintained that the current economic crisis in Nigeria will almost certainly negatively affect enrollments in States in particular and may even undo recent progress achieved toward the elusive goal of universal primary school completion. Where students incur some direct schooling costs, however small, poorer students may have to forego schooling. Economic hardship according Akuh, (2024) in Nigeria has led to

reduction of students' enrolment and increment in drop rate of students from schools. During inflation, economic hardship and economic recession standard of living of people are affected and this directly affects the rate of education financing. During inflation (Ogunode et al., 2024) noted that many poor parents cannot afford to transport their wards to schools regularly and some wards do not eat well in their rooms due to the high prices of foodstuff in the market. The poor feeding of the children at home leads to malnutrition and poor class attendance. This action affects student learning and has led to poor quality of learning. Inflation can hamper education development because it makes all educational resources unreached to school managers, students and parents. Inflation leads to an increase in school fees that affect student enrolment, retention and school completion. Inflation affects facility development and maintenance in schools and can lead to poor quality of education if those resources are not provided as a result of inflation

“Many parents are already struggling to afford basic needs due to inflation, and the increased cost of education forces them to make tough choices. As a result, there is a rising trend of students dropping out of school due to financial constraints. According to a report by Vanguard, UNICEF estimated that more than 18 million children were out of school in Nigeria before the most recent economic challenges. This figure is expected to rise further due to inflation, with northern Nigeria particularly affected, given the region's higher poverty rates and insecurity. The disparity between northern and southern Nigeria continues to grow, with fewer children attending school in the north due to ongoing conflict, kidnappings, and lack of infrastructure (Ifezue, 2024)”.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper discussed the impact of economic hardship on basic education in Nigeria. The paper concluded that economic hardship has affected basic education management, teachers and students in the Nigerian Basic education.

Based on the findings, the paper hereby recommends that the government should increase the funding basic education so that the school administrators can have access to more funds to cope with the increased operational cost of running schools. The government should increase the salaries of basic school teachers since the economic hardship affected their living standard, this will help the teachers cope with the high cost of living. Government should provide education grants for students in basic schools and secondary schools. Governments should provide schools buses to aid teachers and students movement to schools. Governments should provide instructional resources to all students to make them stay in schools.

### **References**

1. Adams, K. A. (2004). How to organize and generate school business. London: Pitman.
2. Afolabi, I. O. (2024). Inflation and Educational Administration in Nigeria *Electronic Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6, (III), 1-9
3. Ahmed, O. A., & Tochukwu, O. A. (2024). Perceived influence of inflation on Nigeria educational system: a case study of Federal Polytechnic, Oko. *International Journal of Research and Innovation In Social Science*, 8(3), 1602-1613.
4. Akuh, E., A (2024) Economic Hardship and Educational Management in Nigeria. *American Journal of Alternative Education* 1(7), 38-42
5. Atiga, T., & Ogunode, N. J. (2021). Management of public secondary school in Nigeria: Challenges and the ways forward. *International Journal of Formal Education*, 1 (3), 1-12.
6. Asuquo, O., O (2019).The Church and the Nigerian Economic Recession. *The journal of arts, humanities and development studies research, (JAHDSR)*, 1(2), 13-19.

7. Gagarawa, A. M., & Mehrotra, M. (2017). Impact of inflation on living standard of public primary school teachers in Gagarawa Local Government Area, Jigawa State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Science Technology and Management*, 6(4), 327-33.
8. Giami, C. B. (2023). Impact of inflation and standard of living on teacher's job performance in public senior secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area, Rivers State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 16(4), 380-388.
9. Ifezue, G. (2024). The Soaring inflation: A Threat to Educational Access and Quality in Nigeria. <https://gloryifezuefoundation.org/2024/09/20/the-soaring-inflation-a-threat-to-educational-access-and-quality-in-nigeria/#:~:text=Inflation%20in%20Nigeria%20has%20led,form%20of%20higher%20tuition%20fees.>
10. Lawinsider (2022). *Definition of Economic Hardship*. <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/economic-hardship>
11. NBER (2012). National Bureau of Economic Research on economic recession, definitions, causes and quotes. <https://nber.org>
12. Ogunode, N. J., & Abiola, S. P. (2022). Shortage of professional teachers in Nigerian educational institutions and the way forward. *Journal of Ethics and Diversity in International Communication*, 1 (4), 9-15.
13. Ogunode, N., J. Olofinkua, V., K. & Sunmonu, I., S. (2024)..Economic Hardship and Tertiary Education Finance in Nigeria: Implication for Decision Making for Sustainable Tertiary Education Development. *American Journal of Corporate Management*, 1,(2),39-49.
14. Ogunode, N., J. Afolabi I., O. & Adi D. (2024). Economic Hardship and its Effect on Tertiary Education Development in Nigeria. *Spanish Journal of Innovation and Integrity* (33), 73-84
15. Ogunode, N., J., Solomon, A., T & Idonigie, A (2024). The Impact of Economic Hardship on Education in Nigeria. *American Journal of Management Practice*, 1(6), 61-69
16. Ogunode N., J, Olofinkua, V., K & Sakirat, S., I (2024). Impact of Inflation on Tertiary Institutions' Research Programme in Nigeria. *American Journal of Management Practice*.1.(5),1-11.
17. Ogunode, N. J., & Ukozor, C. U. (2023). Impact of inflation on university administration in Nigeria. *International Journal on Economics, Finance and Sustainable Development*, 5(9), 204-214.
18. Ogunode, N. J., Cletus, A. N., & Tswenji, S. (2024). Impact of inflation on infrastructure facilities development of basic schools in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Technology Research*, 2(1), 309-320.
19. Ogbebor, P. I., Oguntodu, J. A., & Oyinloye, P. O. (2020). Inflation and standard of living in Nigeria. *Developing Country Studies*, 10(4), 53-60.
20. Sabitu, K. A. (2023). Influence of economic hardship on undergraduates' disposition to academic activities in Oyo state, Nigeria. Paper presented at the 1st international conference of the School of General Studies Education held between 13th - 17th February 2023 at the New Economics Hall, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo state.
21. Tijani, A. A. & Abdullahi, N. J. K. (2021). Economic recession as a correlate of teacher productivity in Kwara state secondary schools, NIGERIA. *Kashere Journal of Education (KJE)* 2(1), 129-137

22. Udi, A (2024) Nigeria's inflation rate jumps to 33.2% in March 2024 – NBS  
<https://nairametrics.com/2024/04/15/nigerias-inflation-rate-jumps-to-33-2-in-march-2024-nbs/>
23. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the UNESCO Culture Sector 2009